

DISCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP OF WRITING APPREHENSION LEVEL AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDE OF FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS IN A STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This endeavor intended to identify the relationship between writing apprehension and language attitude of students. It was a quantitative- correlational research which made use of the Language Attitude Questionnaires of Axler et al. and Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension. Students who were under the Technical-Vocational strand of a state university in Pampanga, Philippines served as respondents of this study. Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that the issue of stereotyping in taking Technical-vocational (Tech-Voc) courses is now removed for female senior high schools students are also attracted to take the course. Although their parents are now degree holders, still, most of the respondents live below the poverty line. Academically speaking, students under the Tech-Voc curriculum are performing well in their English subject. Furthermore, students' exposure to writing intensive course diminishes, if not dissipates their writing apprehension, or avoidance-like attitudes. Although, both male and female senior high school students are exposed to numerous numbers of activities in English, yet, their level of language attitude differs in their academic achievement as well. In addition, gender of the respondents also affects the apprehension level in writing as well as the language attitude of the senior high school students under the Tech-Vocational strand. Lastly, the students' fear of writing is not being influenced by their language attitude.

KEYWORDS: Writing Apprehension, Language Apprehension & Daly-Miller Scale

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Writing is one of the macro skills that a student should master. Although, this skill is being developed from younger years, still, there are some who encounter difficulty in performing writing tasks.

In the study of Aloairdhi (2019), he stated that writing is an important skill in learning and in academic achievement. Most of the subjects require students to come up with activities or written output in English. But, since Filipinos are non-native speakers of the language, they are facing a great dilemma on how to stipulate their thoughts and express their ideas. They consider writing as a hindrance to academic success (Villanueva, 2018). They encounter what is known as writing apprehension.

Writing apprehension is first defined by Daly and Miller (1979) as an avoidance of a writing situations perceived by person to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing.

Researches were conducted in the context of the effect of writing anxiety to different variables. Balta (2018) found out that there was a correlation between writing anxiety and metacognitive awareness. He further

emphasized that by decreasing the anxiety of the students in writing and by increasing their metacognitive awareness, there will be positive effects on their metacognitive text writing skills.

Aside from this, Aloairdhi (2019) added that the level of writing anxiety could affect students' achievement positively or negatively. Balta (2018) found out that students with low writing anxiety were more successful in writing argumentative texts which is in contrary to the findings of Singh and Saravana (2012) that the higher the apprehension level, the better the writing performance. However, Villanueva (2018) posited that writing anxiety does not affect students' writing skills.

Several factors affect the students' writing anxiety (Lui & Huiliuqian, 2015). Some of these include weakness of their past education, lack of confidence and concern for the teachers' evaluation (Olanezhad, 2015).

In addition to this, the researcher believed that if the learners are not interested and possess negative attitude in language learning, they will not be well versed in utilizing the English language and will end up with high anxiety level in writing. Hence, the researchers of this endeavor sought to address the gaps and assess if language attitude and writing anxiety are related to one another.

Furthermore, with the inclusion of research in the new curriculum of education, the researchers were prompted to conduct a study on the language attitude and writing anxiety of the students. It is undeniable that these two variables are essential in writing a paper and knowing their level and attitude in writing and language may eventually help teachers to prepare strategies in teaching research among the students.

Defining Language Attitude

One of the constructs of this problem is the attitude. In general, attitude is a pivotal factor which influences language performance and got considerable attention from both first and second language researchers (Eshghinejad, 2016). Weinburgh in 1998, demarcated attitudes as learning that influences behaviors specifically in choosing and reading books and speaking in foreign language. This means that getting acquainted with the target language does not only rely in the cognitive aspect but also on the learners' attitudes towards language learning. Moreover, Tella, Indoshi and Othuon (2010) concluded that unfavorable perspective toward English is the prime affective and psychological factor that contributes to the students' poor performance in English.

Language attitude can be defined as evaluative reactions to different language varieties. A language variety is a loosely bundled "set of linguistics items with similar social distribution (Hudson, 1996). As such, the following are varieties of language: English, American English, African-American Vernacular English, and Spanish-accented English.

Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication characterized language attitude into following components - cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive component reflects people's beliefs about different varieties; the affective component reflects people's feelings towards different varieties; and finally, the behavioral component reflects people's behavioral predispositions in response to different varieties.

Different people have different attitude towards English. Some students are ashamed when other people hear them speaking the language. They are afraid of criticism. Others are very reluctant in learning the English language for they perceived that their patriotism can be proven when they speak using their national language. They also claimed that it is the best way to get a job and the best way in improving their children's future.

An open guide to Galician language defines language attitudes as opinions, ideas and prejudices that speakers have with respect to a language. It is often concluded that in order to learn the language, a positive attitude towards the language should be manifested.

In 1996, Schiffman perceived that language attitude is a key part of linguistics culture and since language policy is often rooted in linguistics culture, attitude cannot be ignored.

There were researchers conducted to see the attitude of the foreign students or non-native speakers towards English language. One of which was the study conducted by Ibarrran *et al.* (2008) which examined the language attitude of local and immigrant school students in Basque Country in Spain. The findings of the study revealed that immigrant students' attitudes towards English were far more positive than those of local counterparts.

Another study was conducted by Liu and Zhao (2011) on the current language attitude of Mainland Chinese University students. Findings revealed that those participants who held positive attitudes towards English were motivated to learn the language, and valued their association with English-speaking culture and people.

Amin (2009) investigated how Kuwaiti students at the Allied Health Science College in Kuwait University assessed the language attitude and their preference toward code switching using English/Arabic as a medium of instruction. The findings highlighted that the learners' attitude and perception can have varied effects on learner's output in the science subject.

Extant studies on the role of attitude in the learning of foreign languages in different countries with different cultures are examined and utilized. Shams (2008) investigated the students' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety toward the learning of English. Based on the findings of the study, it is found that learners manifested positive attitudes and exhibited lofty enthusiasm toward English. This is also the same with the study conducted by Momani in 2009 which stated that students have also manifested positive attitudes towards the use of English in the Yemeni social and educational context and toward the culture of English-speaking world. However, in the study of Abidin, *et al.* (2012), the participants showed negative attitudes towards learning English.

In terms of relationships with other variables, Fakeye (2010) delved into the relationship between attitude and achievement in English among the students in the secondary level and found out that a relationship existed between attitude and achievement. Journal Nature Communication (2018) reported that girls had significantly higher grades than men by 6.3 percent. In addition, Acar (2016) found out that attitude of the students towards the language was also influenced by their sex.

In recent years, studies are conducted to see the relationship between the language attitude and the writing apprehension of the students. Findings from the studies revealed that language attitude could have a significant influence on student's writing apprehension (Apawu & Anini, 2017; Razak, Rassin & Maasum, 2017).

Research Problem

Generally, this study sought to assess the writing apprehension level of the respondents and the language attitude of the female and male students. In particular, it would like to:

- identify the sex of the respondents;
- identify the educational attainment of the parents;

- identify the monthly income of the parents;
- identify the educational output of the respondents in English 11/technical writing subject;
- assess the writing apprehension level of the female and male students;
- assess the language attitude of the female and male students;
- identify if there is a significant relationship between the sex and the educational output of the respondents;
- identify if there is a difference between the sex and: (8.1), the writing apprehension level; and (8.2) language attitude of the respondents; and,
- identify if there is any significant relationship between the language attitude and the writing apprehension level of the respondents.

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design which made use of adopted instruments. As defined by Calmorin and Calmorin (2004), descriptive design focuses on the present condition, and it aims to find a new truth. The truth may have different forms such as increased quantity of knowledge, a new generalization or a new law, increased insight into factors which are operating, the discovery of new causal relationship, a more accurate formulation of the problem to be solved and many others.

In addition, documentary analysis was employed to gather information on the educational output of the respondents in English 11/technical writing subject.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this endeavor were the senior high school students in one of the state universities in Philippines. Random sampling was employed.

Research Instruments

The main data gathering instrument utilized in this endeavor was the Language Attitude Questionnaires of Axler *et al.* and Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension.

Research Procedure

- The researchers requested for permission from the principal/deans of the respondents. After securing the permission, the researchers arranged the schedule as per section for the distribution of the questionnaires. After which, they personally distributed and retrieved the research tools.
- The researchers requested for the grades of the respondents in English 11/ Technical Writing from their respective teachers after securing the letter of consent.
- The data were analyzed through frequency and percentage to the profile and educational output of the respondents, while mean for the writing apprehension level and language attitude. To see the relationships among variables, Pearson- R was utilized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sex of the Respondents

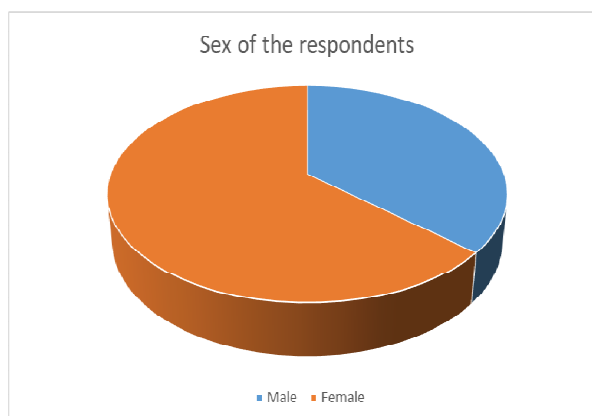


Figure 1: Sex of the Respondents.

Figure 1 shows the sex of the respondents. Based on the findings of the study, out of 96 students, 35 or 36.46% were male while 61 or 63.54 % were female.

It implies that the senior high school students under the Tech-Voc strand were majority females.

Educational Attainment of Parents

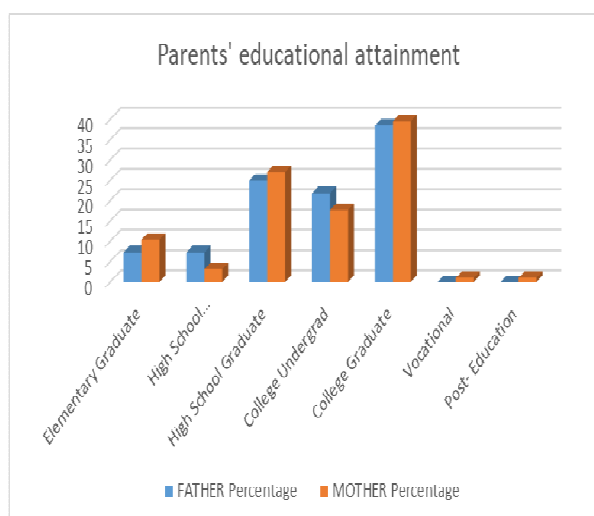


Figure 2: Educational Attainment of Parents.

Figure 2 reflects the educational attainment of the parents. It was overwhelming to note that most of the respondents' fathers were degree holders as well as their mothers with a frequency of 37 or 38.54% and 38 or 39.58%, respectively.

This implies that parents of the 21st century learners already pursued their higher education and obtained baccalaureate degrees.

Monthly Income of the Parents

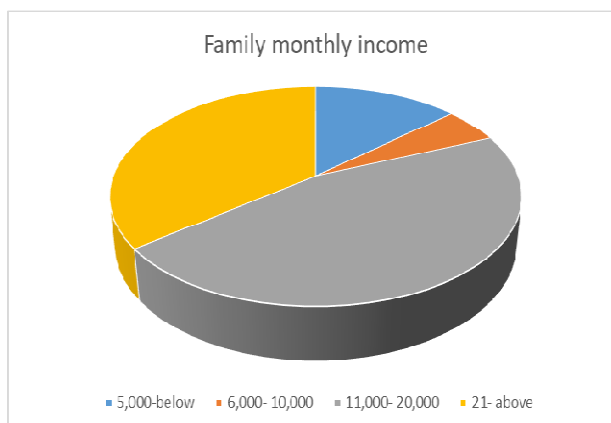


Figure 3: Family Monthly Income.

Shown in the Figure 3 is the monthly income of the respondents' parents. Out of 96 respondents, 44 or 45.83% were under the 11,000-20,000 income bracket. Only a minute frequency of 5 or 5.21 garnered an income of 6,000- 10,000 in a month.

The result implies that most of the respondents lived below the poverty line.

Educational Output of the Respondents in English

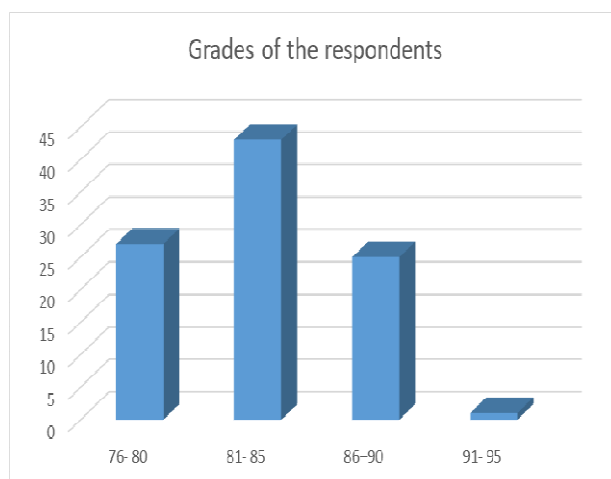


Figure 4: Grades of the Respondents.

The educational output of the respondents is reflected in Figure 4. Among the 96 students who participated in the study, 43 or 44.79% obtained a grade between 81-85 and a sole respondent garnered a grade between 91-95.

The findings of the study manifest that no one among the senior high school students under the Tech-Vocational curriculum failed in their English subject.

Writing Apprehension Level of the Female and Male Students

Table 1 illustrates the level of writing apprehension of the students. From the table, it is evident that both male and female respondents *do not experience significantly unusual level of writing apprehension* with a frequency of 28 and 61, respectively. The closer the individual scores to the mean of 75, the better he or she feels about writing.

The findings showed writing apprehension, or avoidance-like attitudes may be diminished in undergraduate students throughout the duration of a writing intensive course.

Table 1: Writing Apprehension of the Students

Level	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
60-90	28	100	61	100
97-130	0	0	0	0
26-59	0	0	0	0
Total	28	100	61	100

Legend: 60-96 – do not experience significantly unusual level of writing apprehension
; 97-130 – have a low level of writing apprehension;
26-59 – have a high level of writing apprehension.

Language Attitude of the Female and Male Students

Table 2 shows the language attitude of the respondents. The table reveals that male garnered an overall mean of 3.19 interpreted as *Slightly Positive Attitude* while female respondents obtained an overall mean of 3.43 with a descriptive rating of *Moderately Positive Attitude*.

This implies that both male and female respondents did not have the same level of attitude when it comes to language. However, from the statement “*I wish I could speak English fluently*”, it is evident that both set of respondents had *Highly Positive Attitude*.

The result was affirmed by the study of Acar (2016) who found out that language attitude of the female students were considered higher when compared to the male students.

Relationship between the Sex and the Educational Output of the Respondents

The relationship between the sex and the educational output of the respondents is illustrated in Table 2. The result of the study revealed a p-value of 0.000 that was lower than the set alpha of 0.05 level of significance. This can be interpreted that the sex and the grades of the respondents had a highly significant relationship.

In 2018, Journal Nature Communication reported that girls had significantly higher grades than boys by 6.3 per cent.

Table 2: Relationship between the Sex and the Educational Output of the Respondents

Variable	p-value Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Sex vs educational output	0.000	Highly significant

Difference between Male and Female in their Writing Apprehension Level and Language Attitude

Table 3 shows the difference between male and female in their writing apprehension level and language attitude. In terms of writing apprehension level, the obtained p-value was 0.000, which was interpreted as highly significant. On the other hand, language attitude had also a p-value which was lower than the set alpha of .05 level of significance.

The data imply that the sex of the respondents affect the writing apprehension level as well as the language attitude of the senior high school students under the Technical-Vocational strand.

Table 3: Difference between Male and Female in their Writing Apprehension Level and Language Attitude

Variable	p-value Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Writing apprehension level	0.000	Highly significant
Language attitude	0.000	Highly significant

Relationship between Writing Apprehension Level and Language Attitude

The relationship between writing apprehension level and language attitude is reflected in Table 4. A negligible correlation was generated with an r-value of 0.182. With regard to its significance, a p-value of 0.095 was obtained and interpreted as not significant.

This means that the level of writing apprehension of the students do not affect or influence their language attitude and vice-versa.

The result of the analysis affirmed the null hypothesis. However, the finding contradicts the study of Apawu and Anani (2017) who posited that language attitude could have a significant influence on student's writing apprehension.

Table 4: Relationship between Writing Apprehension Level and Language Attitude

Variable	r-value	Degree of Correlation	p-value Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Writing apprehension level vs language attitude	0.182	Negligible correlation	0.095	Not significant

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- The issue of stereotyping in taking Technical- vocational courses is now removed for female senior high schools students are also attracted to take the course;
- Parents of the 21st century learners are now degree holders;
- Considering that most of the respondents' parents are degree holders, yet, most of the respondents live below the poverty line;
- Senior high school students under the Tech-Vocational curriculum are performing well in their English subject;
- Senior high school students' exposure to writing intensive course diminishes, however not dissipates, their writing apprehension, or avoidance-like attitudes ;
- Although both male and female senior high school students are exposed to numerous numbers of activities in English, yet, their level of language attitude differs;
- Regarding the issue of gender sensitivity, the sex still plays a role in terms of the academic achievement of the students;
- Furthermore, sex of the respondents also affects the writing apprehension level as well as the language attitude of the senior high school students under the Tech-Vocational strand;
- Lastly, the students' fear of writing is not being influenced by their language attitude.

RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommended based on the conclusions drawn:

- Although both male and female students do not anymore suffer from writing anxiety, teachers should continue to expose them, particularly, the male students, in writing activities which further helps in enhancing their writing skills;
- There should be a continuous program/activities pertaining to language that will enjoin all students to further develop their positive attitude.

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AUTHORS PROFILE



JASMIN S. VILLANUEVA is a faculty of Pampanga State Agricultural University under the auspices of the College of Education. She has been in the university for almost fifteen years in various capacities: research adviser, resource speaker, researcher, literary trainer/coach and organization adviser.

She finished her degree Bachelor of Arts in English in 2002 (Cum laude) and Master of Arts in English (2008) at Pampanga State Agricultural University. At present, she is pursuing her Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at Don Honorio Ventura Technological University, Bacolor Pampanga.

Being part of her function as professor, she co-authored three college books such as English Plus, Writing in the Discipline and Student Teaching which were all published in 2015. In 2018, she started to venture her career in research and extension. She became a constant presenter in different conferences. She also conducts seminars and workshops in conducting action researches specifically in educational context.

Aside from being a professor, she is also a regular member of Bataan Research Educators Organization, Inc., Pampanga Research Educators Organization, Inc., and many more. She is also the editor of RET Newsletter and at the

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MYLA C. DAYRIT is an Assistant Professor II at Pampanga State Agricultural University, Philippines under the College of Education. She obtained her baccalaureate degree in Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Practical Arts and Livelihood Education and minor in Filipino. She received her Master's degree in Professional Studies in Educational Management in 1999. She is a Professional License Teacher and a National Certificate holder in Event Management Services and Cookery. Being a part of this university, she co-authored Senior High School Work Immersion book which was published in 2019. Aside from a faculty member, she is also a research presenter and she is also a literary coach in the university.



ISABEL MACALINO DIZON is an Associate Professor I who finished two courses- BSSED-TLE and BEED minor in Practical Arts and Livelihood Education. She obtained her Master of Professional Studies at Pampanga State Agricultural University, Philippines and completed academic units and currently writing her dissertation paper with her Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at Don Honorio Ventura State University, Bacolor, Pampanga.

In enhancing her professional growth, she took and passed several National Certificate Assessments/Examinations such as Event Management Services (NC III), Basic Caregiving (NC II), Commercial Cooking (NC II), Housekeeping (NC II), Bread and Pastry Production (NC II), Food Processing (NC II), Cookery (NC II) and Animal Production (NCII).

Aside from her teaching assignments, she is also a research presenter and book writer. Some of her published books are the following: *“Sampaguita” (Jasminum sambac)* : A Compendium of Science and Technology Activities in Pampanga; *“Student Teaching”* which is being utilized by the practice teachers of the College of Education, Pampanga State Agricultural University; *“Family and Consumer Life Skills”* for Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education students and *“Work Immersion”* for Senior High School.

